131 The Kwoma are a mountain-dwelling people. Except for the southeastern
133 slope of Ambunti Mountain, site of the Ambunti Police Post, they control the
entire segment of the Prince Alexander Range which lies northwest of the Sepik.
[262] The territory they claim also includes enough of the sago swamps at the
foot of these mountains to provide them with more than enough of the sago
101 flour which is a staple in their diet. They are surrounded by swamp and
131 river tribes. Living in the sago swamp somewhat to the northwest are the
Amiki and Sowei people, and on a little group of hills to the northeast,
separated by the swamp from the main range, live a half-dozen households who
[197] call themselves Yelagu. The Malu, Yambon, and Yessan, the river neighbors
of the Kwoma, are linguistically and culturally distinct from the mountain
[191] people. When they converse with each other, each speaks his own language,
which the other understands.

619 The Kwoma tribe consists of four subtribes: the Tangwishamp, the
Urambanj, the Koriasi, and the Hongwam. Their territories are contiguous.
[101] The Hongwam, who dwell nearest Ambunti, were the group from which nearly all
the materials here presented were gathered, only a brief trip being made to
[197] the other three subtribes. These four subtribes, although speaking the
[721] same language and bound by not a few ties of trade and intermarriage, are
distinct social entities and not above carrying on head-hunting raids against
one another. More frequently, however, they will band together for raids
against threatened or actual encroachments by non-Kwoma peoples.

361 Each subtribe is divided into several hamlets, most of which are
[368] clustered about a "house tamberan" or men's ceremonial lodge. A hamlet
[423] is usually named after its house tamberan. The arrangement of dwellings in
a hamlet is determined by hereditary ownership of land and also by the
paucity of level sites, owing to the precipitous nature of the mountain slopes.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 1.

October 25, 1936.

101 619 Last night Kum and War visited and we talked about the political divisions of the tribe. They said that the Waskuk and Bangus together were called Hongwam, and that Urambanj, Tangwishamp and Koriasi together were another [197] group called kuome.* These all speak the same language, so they said, and 101 inhabit adjacent mountains. Other adjacent tribes are the Yambon on the river to the south; the Yelagu, one day's walk to the east; and the Numau, 173 three days north-west; and the Kamburu, five days north-west. Before the 721 whites came, they made raids on all of these people to kill them for prestige. 726A large number of them would creep up on a hamlet at night, surround it, and fall on the sleeping inmates with much yelling and shouting. They would kill only those who were near at hand; those who escaped were not followed. [411] They used spears for weapons. Kum and War would not admit they either took [527] heads or were cannibals. The former was the custom of the river people; the [266] latter they had heard of being done on the Markam river.

Hamlets, house tamberans and their history.

173 The Ngaya occupied the present site of Ambunti--the mountains and the adjacent sago swamp. At the time of the grandfathers of the present generation, they were bow and arrow people who killed and ate the Hongwam people. Later when they went to work they would strap pigskin shields to their backs [648] and breasts to protect themselves. Finally the Hongwam called together the Malu, Yambon, Yasi, Nowel, Avatip Urambanj, and Koriasi and they wiped out the Ngaya. A few Ngaya ran away and were absorbed into the people living at Yelagu, but the rest were killed. One reason for getting rid of the Ngaya was that the Hongwam had no sago and were living on the sap of the breadfruit tree.

* Probably Kwoma

619 The Kwoma who live on these mountains are divided into five groups,
[921] Yangwishamp, Urambanj, Koriasi, Hongwam, and Yelagu. Although there is
[197] no political connection between any of these groups, and headhunting is
carried on between them, the language and culture are identical in the
[197] first four of these. Yelagu language has a distinct but overlapping
vocabulary and the structure of the language is similar enough so that
they can communicate with each other. Their culture, from what little
we know about it, is similar. Members of these groups intermarry and trade
[438] with one another despite the headhunting.

614 Hongwam is made up by the fusion of three ethnic groups, the Wanyi,
619 who were the first comers, the Hayamakwo second, and the Tug who came most
[793] recently. Each of these groups have a mythical ancestor, respectively
the pig, the eagle, and the sago palm. Practically all birds, animals,
fish, and vegetables are associated more or less definitely with one or the
[582] other of these groups. These groups do not function in controlling marriage
which is determined by membership in the korump, or house tamberan group.

614 Wanyi had two functioning house tamberans, Hayamakwo one, and Tug
619 three. Beside these there are in each of the three groups several exogamous
621 units too small to build a house tamberan of their own. These latter
groups are the result of a split in the korump from internal friction, of
the migration of a small group of outcasts from another tribe, or of the
inclusion of a remnant of a tribe which has been practically annihilated
by a headhunting raid.

621 The korump is divided into little clusters of houses in which close
602 relatives dwell - usually brothers or father and grown sons. The household
592 itself consists of a man, his wife or wives, and a group of unmarried
736 children - not only his own, but more often than not, the children of his
deceased brothers whom he is caring for.